



**Artist rendering of the Lovell VA/Navy Hospital**

NORTH CHICAGO, ILL. - Congressman Mark Kirk, Apollo XIII Commander James Lovell, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon Mansfield, Navy officials, area veterans and sailors broke ground today on the final phase of the \$130 million expansion of the first-ever joint Navy/VA hospital now rising in North Chicago. The milestone comes nearly a decade after the North Chicago Veterans Medical Center was threatened with closure.



**The Navy/VA program that created Lovell Hospital**

“We owe everything to those who wore the uniform and risked their lives in service to their country,” said Congressman Mark Kirk, one of only two actively-serving Navy Reserve officers in the House. “This first-ever Navy/VA hospital will offer state-of-the-art treatment to ensure our veterans, retirees and military families receive the best possible health care. This model of health care will be replicated throughout the country to boost services and cost savings. We also are lucky to have a national hero and 10th District resident as the hospital’s new namesake. With the Navy/VA hospital named after Captain Lovell, we can be sure that future leaders will think twice before considering the closure of this vitally important facility.”

After a Washington-based consultant recommend the closure of the VA hospital in 2000, Congressman Kirk and local veterans saved the facility by combining it with Naval Hospital Great Lakes. In 2003, Kirk won approval for the first phase of the integration project, moving the Navy’s mental health unit into the North Chicago VA. Two years ago Kirk participated in the opening of a \$13 million joint Navy-VA emergency room and surgical facility. Last year, Congressman Kirk worked with the Department of Defense to name the new hospital after Lake Forest resident, Apollo astronaut and national hero, Captain James A. Lovell, Jr.

The facility is expected to open in 2010 and will save an estimated \$160 million through the projected 40-year life of the hospital. The new center will care for over 100,000 veterans, retirees, sailors and their families. Lovell Hospital will also employ hundreds of Lake County residents.

Congressman Kirk and attendees also cut a ceremonial ribbon for the recently completed parking structure that will service the new center.

A complete timeline of the Navy/VA merger is below.

## Timeline

### 1999-2000

Department of Veterans Affairs announces its CARES decision to close the VA in North Chicago.

January 2001

Congressman Kirk is sworn into office. Numerous amendments and provisions passed into law, reversing the CARES 2000 decision to close the VA hospital.

October 2002

Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs agree to share health care services.

October 2003

\$3 million in improvements made to move Navy Inpatient Behavioral Health Services to VA.

December 2004

Navy/DoD Blood Processing Center relocates to VA.

June 2006

\$15 million in improvements made to move emergency services, operating rooms and inpatient medical and surgical services relocate to VA.

May 2007

Award of \$20 million parking facility contract – the first joint Navy/VA new building.

November 2007

New surface parking completed.

July 2008

New parking structure completed, break ground on Lovell Hospital.

2010

\$130 million Lovell Navy/VA Hospital completed.